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ABSTRACT

Developed to assist vocational students, nontraditional by sex, in finding and keeping training-related jobs, this manual contains strategies for use by all vocational educators--instructors, administrators, and placement specialists. It is intended for use with potential employers, nontraditional and traditional vocational students, advisory council members, and others involved in the placement process. The strategies for student placement are presented in six stages: building a relationship with employers, diagnosis of employer needs, acquiring relevant resources and preparing students, choosing strategies (both employer and student) to enhance placement, gaining acceptance of nontraditional students as employees, and followup and program evaluation. Each stage is overviewed, and then activities are suggested and briefly described. A resource section lists resource people and organizations. (YLB)

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EMPLOYING NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS

A Model to Place Secondary Nontraditional Students in Training Related Occupations

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Foreward

The placement process for nontraditional vocational students, although presenting some unique issues, includes the same ingredients as any other successful placement procedure:

Adequate preparation of the student for the world of work, which includes teaching job skills and attitudes.

Acceptance of the idea that placement responsibilities are shared by all vocational educators.

Anticipation of employer needs and advance preparation to meet those needs.

Attention to specific strategies designed to increase the number and improve the quality of employer contacts.

The ultimate goal of this manual is to assist nontraditional vocational students in finding and keeping training-related jobs. The goal is based upon some fundamental assumptions:

That nontraditional students completing a vocational program received adequate career counseling which enabled them to make an informed career choice;

That the teaching of good work habits and attitudes is an intregal part of every vocational program and is emphasized equally with the teaching of vocational skills;

That efforts to retain nontraditional vocational students have prepared enrollees to deal with real-life job situations.

The focus of the strategies contained in the manual is on the employer. The activities are designed for use by all vocational educators - instructors, administrators, placement specialists - and are intended for use with potential employers and also with nontraditional and traditional vocational students, advisory council members, and others involved in the placement process.

The strategies are presented in six stages:

Stage I: Building a Relationship with Employers

Stage II: Diagnosis of Employer Needs

Stage III: Acquiring Relevant Resources and Preparing Students

Stage IV: Choosing Strategies to Enhance Placement

Stage V: Gaining Acceptance of Nontraditional Students as Employees

Stage VI: Follow-Up and Program Evaluation

The framework for presentation of the material requires visualizing the placement process as an on-going, continous process not an isolated activity conducted once a year. The placement process from an instructor's point of view cannot be distinctly separated from the instructional process. For example: job shadowing is suggested as a strategy whereby a nontraditional student is provided an opportunity to actually observe the daily routine of a worker in the occupation for which the student is being trained. The technique allows the student to validate his/her occupational choice, to gain entry to a local firm employing workers in the types of jobs for which he/she is being trained, and to establish contact with a potential employer. It also allows the employer to observe a nontraditional student in the role of a potential employee and becomes a means by which the vocational instructor enhances his/her relationship with the employer. Later, the instructor may call upon the same employer with a request to interview program completers, including nontraditional students. Once students are placed, periodic feedback allows the instructor to revise curriculum to meet the employer's needs ... thus, enhancing the prospects for future placements.

One bit of advice to keep in mind is that a successful placement is the best advertisement for a program. Whatever your role, get your foot in the door with an employer, then do everything possible to see that the first person placed with that employer is successful! The word will get around.

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Stage I:
Building a Relationship with Employers

Networking

The best method for becoming acquainted with employers who hire is known as networking. Networking is a term used to describe activities by which an individual gains useful information from others. Usually verbal, such information is passed from one person to another via social occasions, business contacts, and informal discussions. We have all heard of "Good Old Boy" networking among executives which provides insiders with employment and promotion opportunities not accessible to outsiders. Instructors need to develop networking skills and relationships with employers in order to enhance the placement of nontraditional students. They also need to teach their students this valuable skill.

Networking takes extensive amounts of time and energy, but the payoff is good relations with employers and local business people as well as successful placement. Networking requires public speaking and becoming visible and active in the community as a part of social and civic organizations, sitting beside and making community decisions with local employers. This may also include becoming active in your community on a nonpartison or political scale. In short, become a "mover and a shaker" in your community.

Networking

TRY THESE ACTIVITIES

1. Vocational instructors should learn to identify situations conducive to network development.

   social gatherings
   community events and functions
   advisory council meetings
   school board meetings

   Practice assertive skills in developing a network of contacts within your community. Set a personal goal to meet at least one new person each week.

   Examples:

   While at social gatherings, gravitate to those you do not know and ask questions about what they do for a living, etc.

   Become sincerely interested in the "other guy".

   Go to community events, civic or social, and introduce yourself to new people. Find out about expanded business options in the community.

Make yourself visible at community functions. Volunteer to serve on committees or provide a speaker for meetings.

Communication Skills

2. Vocational instructors must learn assertive communication skills in order to engage in networking.

   Learn to distinguish between assertive and aggressive behavior. Assertiveness is a positive declaration of a position which affirms one's rights and convictions and which, at the same time, takes into account the rights of others. Assertiveness training is available in workshop or classroom formats from any number of organizations and institutions of higher learning. (See reference section) Assertiveness exercises may be valuable for instructors engaged in placement activities as well as their nontraditional students.

   Develop a series of real life situations, approximately one paragraph in length, followed by a description of five possible reactions ranging from uncertain and ambivalent to those which take a positive and confident stand. Discuss each reaction in terms of how well each would contribute to the person's self-development and self-control.

Business Networks

3. Vocational instructors should initiate networking with the business community.

   Visit local agencies with placement functions.
   Learn the language of each agency.
   Ask to serve on boards or advisory councils.
   Join the local Chamber of Commerce.
   Attend C.O.P.E. meetings.
   Join professional organizations and attend meetings.
   Continue to call on employers who have hired previous graduates.

Advisory Council Meetings

4. Attend all program advisory council meetings. Visit each member's place of business and become genuinely interested in the business. Offer to lend assistance in filling hiring

needs. Ask community employers to visit your classroom and serve as resources for your program.

Visit all agencies in the local community with functions in the placement arena.

For instance:

Employment Security

Community Based Organizations (CETA)

Local colleges or universities (Career Planning and Placement)

Vocational Rehabilitation

Private employment agencies

a. Learn their language. Each agency has a unique jargon of its own. Each agency provides services to specific target groups. Ask for information concerning eligibility requirements and types of services provided.

b. Ask to serve on boards or advisory councils for organizations in the community, whether they deal with placement or not. Create the opportunity to work side by side with community business people with special interests.

Organizations

5. Join the Chamber of Commerce and become an active participant in its educational branch.

Join professional organizations that deal with vocational placement of students. Attend professional organization meetings that address placement issues. Offer to present programs and get on their speaking engagement list. Speak up at meetings and share what works for you and your school.

Possible organizations with local or state chapters:

Statewide Placement

Vocational Education Organizations - AVA,MVA

American Society of Training and Development

COPE Meetings

American Personnel and Guidance Association

Missouri Guidance Association

American Society of Personnel Administrators

Keep a systematic list or file of each contact person's correct name, address, and phone number. Develop an information base with notes to jog your memory concerning each contact's type of business, employment needs and special interests. Keep the list up to date and use it!

a. Write thank you letters each time you have an opportunity to present a program or visit a business.
b. Send invitations to these individuals to attend an open house, visit your school, serve as judges for student competitive events, and participate in school activities.
c. Make sure those individuals receive school newsletters or brochures describing your program. Keep your name and the school's programs in front of them.

Become known as a resource person who is willing and able to provide information and assistance to the community.

(See Stage V: Activity 4)

Building Relationships

Once contacts are made through networking, additional strategies are necessary to build relationships with employers. Many times the impression of professionalism formed by a potential employer concerning a vocational institution is based upon a number of seemingly minor items such as thank you letters and appropriate telephone skills.

TRY THESE ACTIVITIES

Public Speaking

1. Vocational staff responsible for placement activities must be willing to address civic, social, and church organizations about employing nontraditional students.

Business Groups

2. Vocational staff should be willing to address the Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Bureau, or any other group with a gathering of business people.

Luncheon Meetings

3. Vocational staff should arrange to have weekly or bi-monthly meetings with as many business people invited as possible. Luncheons provide an incentive drawing business people to come. Vocational staff could rotate this responsibility for arranging the luncheon and inviting guests.

> Plan program luncheons for business people. They do not need to be elaborate. Invite a small group, no larger than 5, of business people. Use a variety of methods: set aside a section of the cafeteria, the teachers' eating area, brown bag it to the lounge, or whatever is suitable. Conclude with tours of the facility. Focus on the placement area, but do not dwell on that topic. For instance, John Jones is in charge of this month's business luncheons. He decided to have a couple of buckets of fried chicken catored for his 5 visitors. While they ate, the visitors watched a slide show of the school and chatted informally. John showed them the labs on a quick tour and focused on the placement office's newsletters, job club ideas, job bank and exchange. He felt that this indirect approach made his visitors feel comfortable that they were not being "bombarded" for jobs!

Visibility

4. Vocational staff must become a community force by becoming visible and shaking employers' hands.

Public Relations

5. Vocational staff must develop better writing habits to convey information and develop public relations.

Write letters of introduction to employers to describe the vocational education process. For instance, Norm Leterson is a new instructor and wants to introduce himself to community business people. He decided to type letters and include brochures or flyers describing the vocational education process.
For example:

Mr. Bob Chandly
Am-Tech Corporation
Columbo, MO 65292

Dear Mr. Chandly:

It was my pleasure to talk with you at the recent Civilian Meeting. I am pleased that I was able to discuss the Columbo Area Vocational Center and the students that we train here.

Enclosed you will find information on the vocational offerings. I would like to take the opportunity to invite you to visit the Center; and I would most certainly enjoy visiting Am-Tech.

Sincerely,

Norm Leterson

Write a follow-up thank you letter when special visitations have been made. Vocational staff must get into the habit of good public relations. For instance, if Norm Leterson eventually made a visit to Am-Tech, a thank you letter would seal the relationship. Perhaps Mr. Chandly took the time to visit the Center; therefore, Norm Leterson should write a letter to thank him for coming.

Example: A simple form letter is all that is necessary.

Mr. Bob Chandly
Am-Tech Corporation
Columbo, MO 65292

Dear Bob:

Just a note to thank you for taking time to show me around your firm. I hope that we will be able to work together on various projects in the future. The visit really gave me a good understanding of the people and products of Am-Tech.

Sincerely,

Norm Leterson

Telephone Techniques

6. Vocational staff must have pleasant and precise telephoning skills.

Outline a telephone introduction to develop community contacts by telephone. For instance, Gail Marlstead thought she had pretty good telephoning skills. Unfortunately, when she began talking to some of the business people by phone, whe found she sometimes left out information and became flustered. Therefore, she decided to outline precisely what needed to be said. Business people liked this approach. It was straight and to the point.

Stage II:
Diagnosis of Employer Needs

Employer Needs

Diagnosis of employer needs includes an assessment of the degree to which resistance to hire nontraditional students may be present and the factors contributing to resistance. The fact that a local employer has not previously hired a nontraditional employee may in many instances be due to the lack of nontraditional applicants.

It is as important in placing a nontraditional student as any other student to match the applicant to the job. In order to do that, vocational staff members must rely upon the information they receive directly from employers in the form of surveys, personal contacts, and indirect sources such as feedback from students.

TRY THESE ACTIVITIES

Barriers

1. When contacting potential employers informally, elicit their concerns in regard to hiring nontraditional students. Take notes after the visit and categorize responses if possible. For example:
    a. Getting along with coworkers
    b. Physical strength
    c. Ability to do the job
    d. Personal problems - i.e. day care for children
    e. Lack of qualified applicants

    Once the problems are identified, students can be prepared to deal with such concerns in an interview situation.

Survey

2. Conduct a survey of advisory council members to determine attitudes toward the recruitment, retention, and placement of nontraditional vocational students.

    Identify concerns and issues. Try to determine the special problems associated with nontraditional placements in specific vocational areas: women in welding occupations or men in business and office, etc.
    Use information gathered for prioritizing placement activities and for developing solutions to be offered to employers. (See strategies in Stage VI - Follow-Up and Program Evaluation)

In-Service Advisory Council

3. Vocational educators, advisory council members, and all significant people should assemble together to brainstorm or hold placement conferences to get ideas on how and where to place particular students.

   In-service Advisory Councils on Placement.

   Hold placement case conferences with Advisory Council Members, vocational instructors, resource people, and any other significant group.

   For example:

   Trish Hove, vocational instructor, wanted to get her advisory council more involved in the day-to-day happenings of the class. Since placement is always a struggle, she decided to involve her advisory council in job development efforts. Her first strategy was to in-service them on the necessity of placement efforts. Then she had strategy sessions to develop job banks, files and linkage efforts with the community.

   After their lines of communication were developed and meetings were being held on a regular basis, Trish decided to try the council on discussing specific students. Students were interviewed by the council; their skills, attitudes and interests discussed. Sometimes parents, council, and others were involved. The Advisory Council began to take on the duties of placement.

Job Exchange

4. Initiate a job exchange for employers and students. This can consist of the following:
   - bi-monthly flyer with listed job openings, coded so students must see vocational staff responsible.
   - information on the job flyer kept on file so that not just anyone has access to the jobs.

   Initiate a Job Exchange between employers and students. Dan Ripplebury, a placement coordinator, decided to log the number of openings that he knew about in the

community regardless of whether or not they were related to vocational training. Dan had a vocational student office helper assist him. Some of the jobs were part-time jobs and many of the students needed this supplemental income to help them as they went to school. Dan finally decided to log them in an organized manner to present them to the students. Here was his process:

a. Write the job title and create a code number along with a simple description on a weekly flyer. Example:

NO.	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	PAY	HOURS
901	Garden Helper	Mow, trim, clean lawns	$3.75	P.T.
902	Ornamental Welder		Neg.	F.T.

b. Follow up on all of the jobs in the flyer and get all pertinent information from the employer. Put all of this information in a private file, cross coded with the appropriate number.

c. Post or distribute the flyer.

d. If students see a job of interest, they should make an appointment with the placement counselor. Information from the file can be given to the student at the discretion of the counselor.

The advantages of this system, according to Dan, are that the employer learns to call the vocational school first for the job openings rather than taking a chance on applications from the general public. The vocational school also gains because this is a system automatically in place to develop good community relations.

Information Sharing

5. Once employer needs and concerns are identified, such information should be shared with other vocational educators responsible for placement. In addition, students must be knowledgeable of employers' legitimate concerns when employing the nontraditional student.

Role Reversal games are helpful to understand another person's perspective. For instance, Randy Watts, an agriculture instructor, discovered that Gail was having trouble understanding concerns that employers have as they try to perceive her maintaining and repairing heavy agriculture equipment. Mr. Watts designed role reversal games in which Gail became the employer who needed to understand the position of the employee.

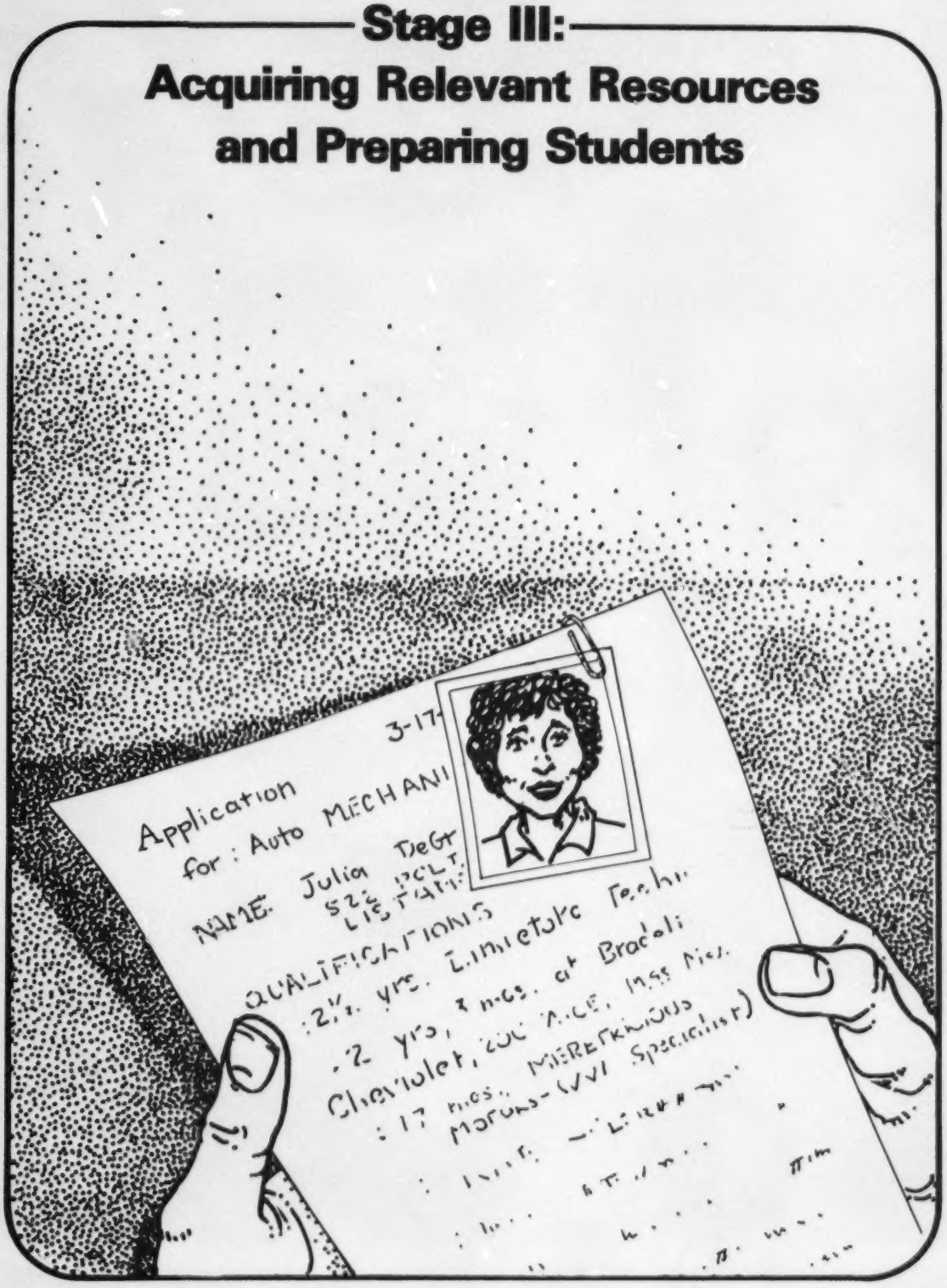
Examples:

Employer: Supervisor of heavy equipment operators (earth moving equipment) Interviewer: A petite young woman.

Employer: Office manager of manufacturing firm Interviewer: Male clerk typist

The class should be able to break into groups and develop the realistic questions that would be asked, present the situation to the total class, and then react to the situations presented.

Stage III:
Acquiring Relevant Resources and Preparing Students



Teamwork

There are four major groups of actors in the occupational placement of the nontraditional student: vocational administration, sending school staff and administration, vocational support staff, and the vocational instructors. Vocational instructors typically find themselves in a position, along with counselors and placement staff, to positively affect the occupational placement of all students.

Acquiring relevant resources to allow each of these groups to become pros at placement is a key item. Resources may include, but should not be limited to purchased materials, audio-visual equipment, in-service training, workshops, guest speakers, nontraditional role models, and on-staff placement specialists as well as advisory councils.

TRY THESE ACTIVITIES

Administrative Support

1. Vocational administrators must show their active support of placement of nontraditional students.

   Create incentives for instructors, staff, counselors, and placement specialists to become an active liaison with the community.

   Be visible in the classroom, at advisory council meetings, and in the community speaking about the nontraditional students.

   Be supportive in the school system by initiating a placement task force of teachers, counselors, parents and business people supportive to the efforts of placement of nontraditional students.

Sending School Staff

2. Sending school personnel can show their active support by taking an overall interest in the accomplishment of the goals of the nontraditional vocational student.

   Participate in the placement task force created at the vocational school for nontraditional students.

Be aware of the nontraditional student's employment goals so that as sending school personnel come in contact with the business public possible job leads can be given to the students.

Attend a variety of professional organization meetings dealing with the topic of placement of the nontraditional student in employment; for instance the Missouri Vocational Association.

Attend in-service or conferences of Statewide Placement, a state organization that deals with employment of vocational students.

Classroom Support

3. Vocational instructors must take an active lead in the appropriate employment of nontraditional students.

Participate in in-service provided to learn appropriate placement techniques.

Devote classtime to nontraditional students' employment skills.

Promote programs and students in as many ways as possible.

- Through advisory councils
- Participation in community functions
- Speaking engagement or civic, social, professional groups
- Distribution of business cards
- Invitations to open houses

Assist in organizing seminars for nontraditional students that focus on the employment issue.

Support Staff

4. Vocational resource personnel must be responsive to the employment efforts of the nontraditional students.

Provide resource material available on job seeking techniques (see reference section).

Provide linkage between nontraditional students and community employers.

Develop job bulletins with vacancy listings.
Assist in setting up interviews for nontraditional students.
Attend program advisory councils.
Attend and speak at civic/social functions.

Provide leadership in the development of the placement task force.

Provide in-service to other staff involved with the placement process of nontraditional students.

Attend conferences and organizational meetings dealing with placement of nontraditional students.

Organize seminars for nontraditional students that focus on the employment issue.

Professional Organizations

5. The Missouri Vocational Association Conference Planning Committee for the Special Services could offer seminars or workshops to train vocational staff responsible for placement of nontraditional students.

Involve yourself in the planning for the State Vocational Association Conference and make sure placement related sections are part of the program. If placement techniques for the nontraditional student are to be shared with people in the state, this would be the most logical organization to use to spread the word.

Staff In-Service

6. The vocational administration could offer in-service programs to vocational staff on placement of nontraditional students. Higher education institutions could offer for credit a course in student placement, and offer as one unit "Placement of the Nontraditional Student".

Coordinate in-service or course credit for instructors or staff who desire to know more about placement of nontraditional students.

For example:

Dr. Miller, director of Pine Roads Vocational Skills Center, knows that the placement record for the vocational center has exhibited a downward trend for the past two years. Dr. Miller is considering two possible options:

a. She will ask the staff how many would participate in a college credit course to focus on placement. She could arrange for the school district to pay for the tuition and travel costs to the extension course site.
b. She will ask for technical assistance for a series of in-service workshops or seminars on placement of nontraditional and traditional students from the State Department or Statewide Placement.

Various teaching methods should be used with nontraditional students to facilitate their learning of the job hunting process.

Student Preparation

Job seeking solicits a variety of responses from students. To some, job seeking is threatening, meaning the end of school-peer security and the precarious step to independence. To others, it is a way of life and a natural step after the conclusion of an educational experience. However, the strongest and most secure student may falter under the blow of a rugged interview. To this end, job seeking skills must be taught in the most creative, nonthreatening, and most supportive atmosphere available. Students must be taught the ins and outs, for job seeking is seldom done only one time in an individual's life. If the vocational staff takes all of the responsibility for a student's first job hunt, very little is achieved if the student finds job hunting a necessary step at a later date.

TRY THESE ACTIVITIES

Job Seeking

1. Nontraditional students can learn job seeking skills as components of V.I.C.A. or other student/youth organizations. The support group is automatically built in.

   Organize V.I.C.A. meetings to develop job seeking skills seminars or meetings at least once per month. (Many vocational schools make the error of focusing on this the last few weeks of the school experience.) Plan at the beginning of the school year what job seeking activities would be useful as topics for the coming year.

   Example:

   The following are topics which suggest useful information to be learned by the student. The student officers and their sponsors met and decided on the following:

   a. How to interview the employer.
   b. "Casing" the joint or finding out about the company.
   c. How to answer "problem questions" with positive answers.
   d. Employer concerns related to hiring nontraditional students and how to alleviate those concerns.

Job Preparation

2. Vocational staff should be able to infuse the much needed job preparation curriculum into the day-to-day class activities. For example: organize field trips; or for vocational staff involved in classroom activities, set aside one class period regularly for job preparation curriculum.

   Infuse as much job seeking into the course as possible.

   For example:

   Mr. Dotes, welding instructor, has decided upon the following activities:

   a. Arrange field trips to a custom welding shop and a major fabricator.

b. Purchase curriculum modules (he has $200 extra in his budget this year).
c. Send students on assignments to practice interviews with some of the local employers he knows.
d. Suggest to administration the offering of a credit course that deals specifically with job seeking; i.e., a job club.

Job Club

3. Vocational staff could offer a vocational class for credit that deals with the job seeking component - job club.

Individualized Instruction

4. Vocational staff could set up modules with the resource staff so that a student can have independent access to job seeking materials.

Develop individualized instruction modules.

Example:

A student may need more assistance in writing a good resume. Many commercial packages can be purchased, or a package can be locally developed to assist this student. Plan for a work sheet, cassette tapes, slides or filmstrip if possible. Have this material accessible so that a student can work on it during spare or class time without interrupting other students.

Be sure to emphasize to students that a resume is a vehicle for personalizing a job application, something to make the job seeker unique. Writing a resume also helps the applicant identify his/her strengths and weaknesses prior to the interview. The resume is an excellent instructional tool when combined with role playing the interview situation.

Instructional Techniques

5. Regardless of whether seminars or class instruction are intended, a variety of student activities such as presentations, role play situations, and case studies are valuable as learning tools. Video taping is an additional plus if the facility has the equipment. The caution to note here is that video taping must show good student performance. It is detrimental to the student to show poor performance.

Purchase or Borrow audio-visual equipment as a supplement to seminars or class meetings.

Activity: Video taping

Examples: Focus on the good interview. Playing back a tape of a poor interview can damage a student's (already) bruised self-esteem.

a. Show students with good posture, eye contact, and enthusiastic interview.

b. Show "body language" - expressions, gestures.

Resource Persons

6. Parents, employers, and other teachers could also be called upon to assist in the teaching effort to direct students' knowledge of job seeking.

Invite local employers to critique resumes, participate in mock interviews, and/or discuss the characteristics of a good resume and a successful interview.

Stage IV:
Choosing Strategies to Enhance Placement

Employer Strategies

In choosing strategies to enhance placement, the school system must plan supportive efforts directed toward potential employers of nontraditional students. Many employers have stereotyped notions about people. In the development of placement sites for nontraditional students, vocational institutions cannot overlook this factor. Sometimes employers must have incentives to hire particular groups of people. Perhaps employers desire to hire the nontraditional student but would feel more comfortable if they had more information or support from the training institution. School systems must make their resources known to the employer. These resources come in the form of technical assistance, informal instruction over coffee, and/or invitations to educational conferences.

TRY THESE ACTIVITIES

Employer Assistance

1. School systems must be willing to offer technical assistance to employers who hire and/or are potential employers of the nontraditional student.

   Offer to provide assistance if problems occur.

   Offer to provide training for co-workers of nontraditional employees.

   Particularly in the trade and industrial areas, offer to provide training to employers in the advantageous use of equipment.

Employer Involvement

2. Encourage employers to serve on advisory councils and/or visit the vocational school. Involve employers in issues related to nontraditional student placement.

   Offer short informative presentations to employers whenever the opportunity arises.

   For example:

   Use the transparency masters in Retention of Nontraditional Students: Strategies for Classroom Support to orient employers to the special concerns of nontraditional students and employers. (Available from the Instructional Materials Laboratory, University of Missouri-Columbia, 10 Industrial Education Building, Columbia, Missouri 65211.)

Provide opportunities for employers to assume an instructional role:

- as guest speaker or member of a panel
- as a judge for competitive events
- as tour host/hostess for a field trip to the employer's work site
- as the personnel officer in a role playing situation
- as curriculum consultant for the validation of competencies necessary for the occupation
- as co-presenter of programs for seminars, in-service training, civic meetings, etc.

State Conferences

3. State conferences should be encouraged to begin offering workshops and conference offerings geared toward employers. Employers must be invited to come and participate in the conferences.

Insist that vocational conferences offered at the state and local level include placement components and that employers from the surrounding geographic area receive invitations to attend or present.

For example:

Sarah Miles is on the planning committee for one of the sections of the state conference. She has insisted that vocational education must make efforts to include local business people. She made the following suggestions:

a. Focus on the theme of collaboration of private sector and vocational education.
b. Offer sessions that highlight unions, hiring decisions, personnel tests, screening, and apprenticeships. Insist that the presenters be practitioners with experience in each of these areas.
c. Invite as many business people as educators and send personal invitations from the organization's president.

Employer Recognition

4. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education can offer incentives to employers to cooperate with vocational schools and nontraditional placement efforts. (The Governors' Committee on Employment of the Handicapped offers a similar award to employers of the handicapped.)

Ask that the State Department offer incentives to employers who cooperate in hiring and promoting vocational students as well as nontraditional students. This could be in a simple form such as a certificate.

For example:

George Bailey, placement coordinator at a local area vocational school, has worked very closely with Gladly's Glass Works. As this business expands and contracts with the economic cycles, Gladly's has always looked toward the vocational school for skilled help in both good and not so good times. George would really like to show special appreciation to this company. He has asked the State Department of Education for some type of certificate of appreciation or a letter from the state director or State Advisory Council commending Gladly's Glass Works.

Business Cards

5. Vocational staff must be willing to share and distribute their business cards and/or written information with employers or business people with whom they come in contact.

Design your own business card and distribute this card at the meetings you attend.

Identifying Employers

6. Vocational staff must recognize that leads for potential employers are everywhere: material suppliers (lumber, auto or electrical parts, welding, food service or office), print media (yellow pages of phone directories, trade magazines, newspapers, school newspapers), agencies (labor unions, state employment offices), individuals (friends, relatives, neighbors), and miscellaneous sources (surveys, business and industry days).

Send brochures to employers describing the assets of vocational education.

Student Strategies

Choosing strategies to enhance placement begins with the employer but should also include the strategies designed to better assist students in the job seeking process. Nontraditional students must do everything in the interview well if they are seeking employment with an employer who has some reservations concerning their hiring.

TRY THESE ACTIVITIES

Communication Skills

1. Vocational students must learn assertive communication, interaction, and diplomacy skills.

   Role Play different types of interview sessions where the student is allowed to practice assertive skills to work on diplomacy and good verbal interaction.

   Examples:

   Set up role play situations where these comments are made.

   a. Employer: "I notice you are neatly dressed. Are you going to mind getting dirty on the job or having grease under your fingernails?"

      Student: What would be an aggressive response? What would be an assertive response? How could this situation be turned to a positive encounter?

   b. Employer: "How are you going to react to the sometimes crude language of other employees?"

      Student: What would be a diplomatic response that would not raise any hostilities?

   c. Employer: "I have many other people who have applied for this job - I will give you a call if anything develops."

      Student: What assertive response would pin the employer to a definable time to respond, and to know that you do have the skills?

2. Vocational staff need to prepare nontraditional students to approach employers.
    a. Students need knowledge of employer's hiring decisions.
    b. Students need to organize a good resume.
    c. Students need to learn how to inquire about jobs: by phone, in person, and by letter.

Discuss different hiring decisions made by employers.

For example:

You know of two employers who hire if the employee "looks and sounds" right regardless of skills!

Activity I: Have students discuss who would be most likely to succeed in a job interview situation taking the following into consideration:

a. Eye contact, body posture, hygiene
b. Question/Answer sessions
c. Prior knowledge of company and employees
d. Training and learning emphasis
e. Appearance of maturity

Activity II: Have students discuss the appropriate dress for a particular job.

a. Should a woman wear a dress or a tailored pantsuit to an interview for a welding job?
b. In the same situation, what should be taken along to wear if the interviewer asks her to demonstrate her welding skills?
c. What is the appropriate dress for a male applying for a clerk-typist position? for a health occupations job?

Remind students that a resume is a powerful tool when used to advantage. It provides the opportunity to tell the employer what you want her/him to know.

For example:

If the student has dependable transportation and a good back-up method for getting to work, include that in the resume. Emphasize such things as outstanding attendance and dependable childcare when appropriate.

Remember, an employer may not be able to ask about such things, but he/she appreciates the volunteering of this type of information, and it personalizes the application.

Telephone Skills

3. Nontraditional students need to develop strong telephoning skills to make a positive first impression on the hiring official.

Write a script and practice this script for introducing yourself by phone or in person. It should be tailored for different occasions. Here are various occasions and examples that might help.

Example 1: Telephone job inquiry. Give a little information about yourself, get to the point, and ask for a specific person.

Student: "Hello, my name is Jane Ann Regin and I am a student at Vocational Education High. I would like to inquire about a job opening. Whom would I speak with?" or "May I speak with _____?"

Example 2: Introducing oneself to an employer. Make it simple and hit the highlights!

Student: "Here is my resume so that you can look it over later. My name is Jane Ann Regin and I have recently graduated from Vocational Education High with a major in Auto Technology. I grew up in this area, all my family lives here, and I would like to stay in this area. I would like to have a job, earn a good income, and grow with a good company." The student might be encouraged to mention hobbies, other interests, past successful employment, school or community activities.

Education/ Skills

Family Background. Commitment

Example 3: Letters of introduction and thank you letters to employers.

Interview Barriers

4. Nontraditional vocational students need to be able to identify problem questions during an interview and turn these questions into positive situations. Remind students that these may be areas of legitimate concern to employers (see Stage II: Diagnosis of Employer Needs).

   Worksheets should be developed to assist students in spotting "problem questions" during interviews and on application forms. For instance, you know that employers are hiring people with experience first. You need to help students get through that barrier.

   Activity: These could be considered topics for some students.

   a. Physical disabilities that interfere with employment
   b. Lack of work experience
   c. Medication
   d. Prospects of family and children
   e. Questions about personal goals for the year or future years
   f. Child care and/or transportation
   g. Willingness to work additional hours or different shifts

   Activity: Also have students bring in various application forms and complete them. Trade or break down into groups to critique each others' answers.

   Activity: Set up role play interviews with "problem questions". Each student can practice his/her "assertiveness" skills and learn to turn these questions around to be positive.

Interviewing Skills

5. Nontraditional students need to practice interviewing with as many different types of employers as there are employer styles.

   Observe different styles projected by employers. Help the students understand and learn to respond to different employers and their styles.

For example:

You know that Jim and Jo of Denkon's Autobody are terrible at interviewing, but the job is great once a person is hired.

Activity: Role play any situation to prepare a student for different interview styles and to avoid being caught "off guard"!

Role play and discuss the "social" interviewer. What is the student's best reaction to this type? Role play and discuss the question and answer (sometimes the interrogator) style. How should students react to this? Role play and discuss panel or group interviews.

Thank You Letters

6. Nontraditional students need to develop the habit of writing thank you letters to the employer who interviews them.

Apprenticeship

7. If nontraditional students are going to seek apprenticeship status, they need to be aware of union hiring halls and apprenticeship tests and dates. Nontraditional students need to be aware of the traditional barriers that are present in union hiring halls.

Read and Discuss the notion of unions and hiring halls and how they differ from non-union companies' personnel officers or hiring officials.

For example:

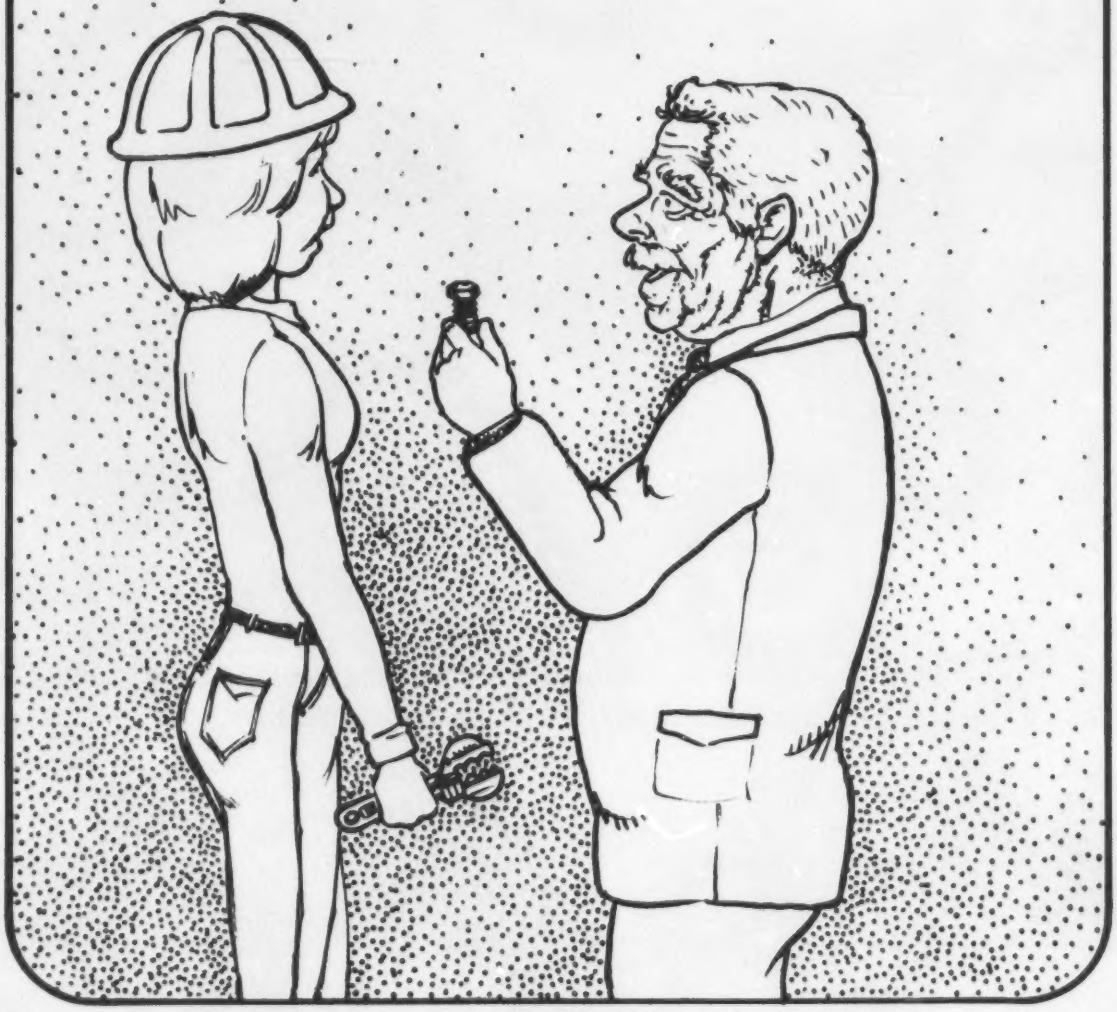
You know most of the jobs in construction are union controlled. The students in your building trades class must understand the union.

Activity: Have a local union officer speak to the students in regard to hiring decisions, apprentice programs, and how they comply with affirmative action and the Office of Equal Opportunity.

Affirmative Action

8. Students need to become familiar with the Office of Equal Opportunity's affirmative action rules and to know what questions employers can and cannot legally ask (see Activity 1).

Stage V:
Gaining Acceptance of Nontraditional Students as Employees



Potential Employers

Approaching the employer for potential employment of the nontraditional student is in some ways similar to placing traditional students in employment. In some regards it is very different. For instance, because of stereotyped notions some employers have concerning women and work, more gentle persuasion must be used. Often many more employers must be approached by the vocational staff. This takes time. Employers must be educated about what it is like to interview, employ, and work with a nontraditional worker. This takes planning and effort on the part of the vocational staff. Similarities arise in placing nontraditional and traditional students when vocational educators find themselves shaking hands, presenting at organizations, developing job banks, and, in general, making themselves visible to community business people.

How do vocational staff locate the employers willing to hire the nontraditional worker? This is simply not a matter of sorting out who will employ nontraditional students and who will not. Rather, if a few nontraditional workers are successfully placed, this becomes a powerful force in a number of ways: The employers talk to each other about the success, and employees talk to other employers about their success. Word of mouth and positive influences begin to take place. Vocational staff must be willing to "pick up" on the influence and offer seminars and in-service to the community so that potential employers and unions have a resource for eventual hiring of trained and skilled workers.

TRY THESE ACTIVITIES

Guest Speakers

1. Invite community resource people to explain their work and place of employment to vocational classes.

Field Trips

2. Arrange visits for groups of students or individual students to observe workers on their jobs.

Job Leads

3. Follow up job leads or suggestions that you hear about made by family members or friends of the students.

Employer Information

4. Start an organizational filing system of employers and/or business people with whom you have been successful in developing employment relations.

Develop a filing system of business people you meet in the community. Visit them and develop an information file on a 3x5 or 5x8 inch index card. The following serves as an example:

	Contact Person:
	Position:
Company Name:	
Address:	
Phone No.:	
Product or Service:	
Number of Employees:	
Hiring Methods:	
Positions Available:	

Keep these cards updated and make these contacts regularly to stay informed of business transactions, future hires, and growth of the company.

In-Servicing Employers

5. Offer in-service workshops to employers in regard to tips on interviewing nontraditional workers.

Discuss with employers particular tips to take into consideration when interviewing nontraditional students. These can be offered informally during in-service, or on flyers, suggestion sheets, or brochures.

Examples of tips:

a. Suggest that employers not refer to women employees as "girls."
b. Suggest that employers not ask how a young man feels about working around women or in a "woman's role."
c. Suggest that employers avoid asking applicants why they selected that particular field.
d. Employers should avoid asking situational questions which bring up the gender of the applicant. One example is, "What will you do when the guys whistle at you?"

e. Speak frankly about the job and its requirements to determine if the applicant has the ability to accomplish the tasks at hand.

In-Servicing Employees

6. Offer in-service workshops to co-workers of nontraditional students.

Offer vocational education workshops to local business people. For example, many company personnel officers may not know about the vocational training programs available. By inviting groups of business people you will not only make them aware of vocational programs but also of traditional and nontraditional students with skills.

Employer Acceptance

Gaining acceptance of nontraditional students as employees requires creative effort on the part of vocational educators. Acceptance is enhanced by activities designed to bring the employer and potential employee together prior to actual job seeking. It is important for employers to become accustomed to the sight of nontraditional students in a job situation.

TRY THESE ACTIVITIES

Career-For-A-Day

1. Learn to organize and implement a Career-For-A-Day program for nontraditional students.

   Explore job shadowing techniques. Plan a Career-For-A-Day program to match employers with nontraditional students for a one day job shadowing experience. Make sure students are adequately prepared for the event.

   Provide transportation if necessary.

   Review proper dress requirements for the job with each student.

   Have students develop a list of specific objectives for the day - questions to ask, etc.

   Have each employer develop a written agenda for the day to make sure each student's day is planned to include all aspects of the job.

   Arrange a sharing session for students to follow up this activity and discuss their experiences.

   Require each student participant to write a thank you note to the employer he/she shadowed.

Job Exchange

2. Learn to organize a Job Exchange Day where various employers are on hand to interview students.

   Plan activities well in advance. Job Exchange Days, Career-For-A-Day programs, workshops, and seminars all require detailed advance planning. Draw upon your networking contacts to identify qualified speakers and/or employers as participants. Send necessary information in regard to topics, directions, time schedules, room numbers, etc., well

in advance to both presenters and participants. Check back to confirm guest speaker's commitments and answer questions. Be prepared to fill in last minute cancellations with back-up speakers. Evaluate your efforts. Improve planning for future activities. Be sure to send thank you letters to speakers.

Ask your colleagues and peers to participate in career fairs, etc. You can't do it alone. Use networking skills with your fellow educators. Emphasize cooperation and the mutual benefits of such activities. Obtain administrative support in advance of planning and be sure to express your appreciation for that support.

Job Seeking Seminars

3. Learn to develop job seeking seminars for nontraditional students.

Prepare students for participation in Job Exchange Day activities. Provide information in advance about the employers present and their businesses. Review interview techniques using role playing and interview situations. Have students practice completing a job application form and come prepared with the necessary information required by most employers. Develop a schedule for students in order to avoid bottlenecks occurring during the day.

Job Clubs

4. Learn to develop and implement job clubs for nontraditional students.

Share job search and job club techniques with colleagues. Offer to provide speakers for faculty in-service workshops to enhance educator's knowledge and expertise in these areas. Learn to identify resource persons throughout the state to sharpen your own skills in these areas.

Job Listing

5. Develop a circular or brochure on business vacancies complete with job descriptions. Code each vacancy to a file card kept at your desk to control the match between applicant and vacancy.

Case Conference Techniques

6. Learn case conference techniques in which individual student placement problems are brought before a group, i.e., an advisory council, for suggestions.

Career Ladders

7. Learn to distinguish those jobs which have career ladders from those which do not by asking employers critical questions and making astute observations.

Write a guide for students to assess the existence of career ladders in potential jobs and specific companies.

Examples:

a. From this position, what jobs can one be promoted to with experience?
b. How much experience is required?
c. Is further training required?
d. If so, does the company provide it?
e. How are participants for training selected?
f. Who pays for the training?
g. Is the company committed to promoting from within or does it fill openings from outside sources?

Vocational Education Workshops

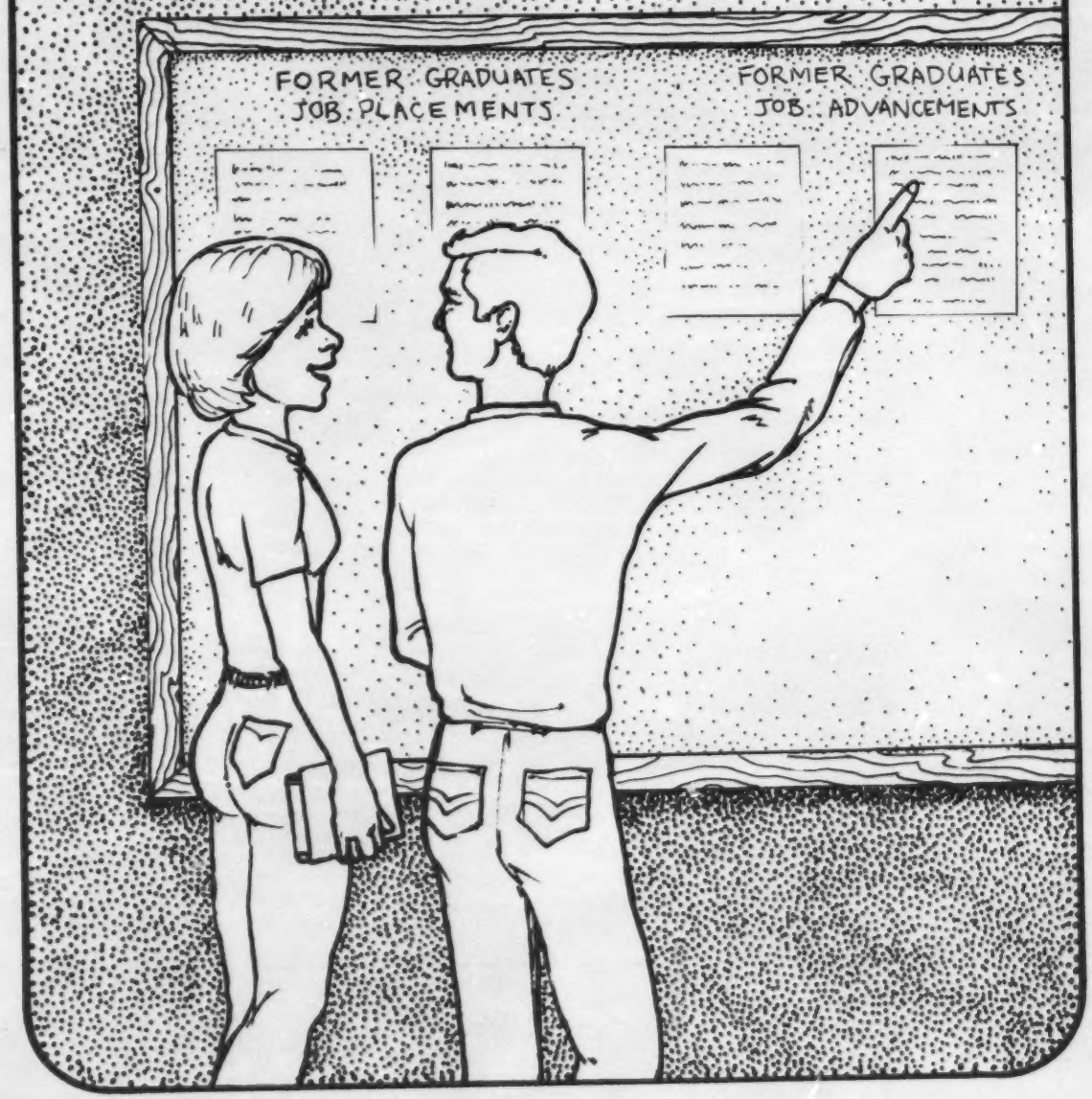
8. Develop and present workshops for employers on the benefits of vocational education, focusing on the nontraditional worker.

Develop professional audio-visual and printed materials for workshops and seminars. Make sure your materials reflect the high quality of your program. Utilize commercial materials when appropriate, and learn to identify resource centers in universities and other organizations which provide free materials or loan materials.

Public Relations

9. Arrange to have at least one business person (potential employer) per week invited in for lunch/coffee/refreshments, tour of the facility, etc., to become acquainted with the vocational education process.

Stage VI: Follow-Up and Program Evaluation



Follow-Up and Evaluation

In addition to conducting an evaluation of the short-term outcomes of nontraditional recruitment, retention, and placement efforts, it is important to evaluate the long-term effects on the knowledge and performance of graduates. To do this, vocational educators conduct follow-up studies of former students and their employers. Even if significant gains for participants, based on pre- and post-test scores and completion rates exist, broader questions remain.

- What are the long-term effects of vocational education on nontraditional workers?
- Are the objectives and content of the curriculum enabling students to meet the demands of the working world?
- Does a student's mastery of course objectives indicate a likelihood of successful job placement and performance?
- How can nontraditional student placement activities be improved?
- How do nontraditional students compare with other program graduates in terms of salary, employment, job satisfaction, employer satisfaction, and career patterns?

The long-term effects of vocational education on any student can be understood after a follow-up evaluation has been conducted. A follow-up evaluation is valuable after the first few months, and even after the first year, of work activity. Since nontraditional students present a unique set of circumstances, future students may benefit if the nontraditional student is followed separately from the traditional student. A good follow-up instrument will show the strengths and weaknesses of vocational curriculum in which nontraditional students are involved during their training period and will provide an indication of the adequacy of placement efforts.

TRY THESE ACTIVITIES

Informal Follow-Up

1. Compile a current list of all nontraditional graduates and their mailing addresses, telephone numbers, and employment status.

Utilizing Follow-Up Information

2. Post lists of graduates and their current employment status on the wall or bulletin board in classrooms or the placement office. Identify the nontraditional students.

   Compile information on graduates for reference, for course reviews and revisions.

   Example:

   Gayle Narstood has posted all of her vocational education student completers for the past five years. She lists their name (only with their permission), where they work, and any comments they may have that reflect back on the type of training experiences they had at the vocational school. Sometimes Gayle incorporates these comments into course revisions - particularly where new techniques are becoming popular in industry, or she includes the comments in the school's annual report.

   Gayle also asks permission of the nontraditional student to be identified on this list. She marks them with an asterisk. Their comments are extremely valuable to determine ways in which she can make it easier for the nontraditional worker to meet the market demands.

Employer Interviews

3. Conduct follow-up, employer interviews at least once a year and update records.

Placement Interviews

4. Conduct interviews with placed graduates. Continuously update lists of recommendations from placed graduates for improving vocational programs and nontraditional student support services.

Salary Records

5. Develop confidential salary records for traditional and nontraditional students.

Program Leavers

6. Maintain records of nontraditional students who secured employment without completing a vocational program. Indicate whether such employment is training related.

Drop Outs

7. Keep records of nontraditional students who completed much of a vocational program, dropped out, and did not secure employment in their field.

Formal Evaluation

8. Plan a follow-up evaluation. Involve instructors, administrators, advisory council members, etc.

   Define the goals and objectives of the evaluation. This step determines whether or not the students' perceptions of the quality and appropriateness of their training, employers' satisfaction with graduates' job performance, and nontraditional students' career patterns in comparison with traditional students will be evaluated.

   Obtain the support of a pre-existing citizens' advisory committee, employers, and program completers and leavers to advise and/or assist in follow-up evaluation activities.

   Select a method of data collection:

   Personal interview - results in a high rate of response and is effective in developing public relations, but may be too costly in terms of time required and travel costs.

   Telephone interview - also results in a high rate of response and is effective for public relations, but may also be too costly when long-distance calls must be made.

   Mail questionnaire - is a lower cost method of data collection, may be more effective in obtaining income information, but often has a low response rate.

   Locate or develop a data collection instrument consistent with the goals and objectives of the evaluation. Some sources of help include:

   a. The director of the State Research Coordinating Unit for vocational education.

b. A school administrator or director of vocational education in the local school system.
c. Missouri Statewide Placement Service
d. Vocational Education Measures: Instruments to Survey Former Students and their Employers by Gray, Abram, McKinney, and Billings. Ohio State University, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, 1978.

Develop a data analysis plan at the same time as the development of the data collection instrument.

Interpret and communicate evaluation results in order to effect improvement based on evaluation results and recommendations.

Resource Section

PEOPLE AND PLACES

1. Career Planning and Placement
   University of Missouri-Columbia
   Columbia, Missouri 65211

   Provides complete career awareness library as well as resource materials and seminars (sometimes specifically geared to women) on job seeking.

2. Missouri Career Education
   Regional Resource Center
   Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
   Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

   Publishes a bibliography of materials available for loan.

3. Instructional Materials Laboratory
   10 Industrial Education
   University of Missouri-Columbia
   Columbia, Missouri 65211

   Has a resource center containing audio-visual and printed materials for loan to Missouri vocational educators; distributes free materials and catalogs of sex equity materials; provides limited technical assistance to educators.

4. State-Wide Placement
   Gary L. Noland, Job Placement Director
   Monte Cass, Coordinator
   State Fair Community College
   Sedalia, Missouri 65301

   Coordinates inservice employment seminars for secondary vocational educators; has workbook, Help Yourself to Successful Employment, as well as audio-visual materials available.

5. Georganna Hargadine, Director
   Special Vocational Services
   Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
   Post Office Box 580
   Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

   Provides information related to grants to school districts to eliminate sex stereotyping in vocational education; conducts in-service workshops and provides technical assistance.

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